

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-20

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SANTIAGO (BY POUCH)

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TAGS: PFOR, COL, CI

SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN REACTION TO EVENTS IN CHILE

1. THE OVERTHROW OF THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT AND THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT ALLENDE HAVE BEEN THE PARAMOUNT TOPICS OF DISCUSSION FOR THE PAST DAY AND A HALF IN THE BOGOTA PRESS, WITHIN THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND AMONG THE PUBLIC AT LARGE.

2. ALL BOGOTA DAILIES HEADLINED THE CHILEAN EVENTS AND DEVOTED MOST OF THEIR FRONT PAGES TO A LARGE ZONE AS CONSIDERABLE INTERIOR SPACE TO DISPATCHES FROM SANTIAGO AND TO EDITORIALS ON THE EVENTS. COVERAGE WAS LARGELY FACTUAL ALTHOUGH LA REPUBLICA

(CONSERVATIVE) HEADLINED THE EVENT WITH THE WORDS "CHILE LIBERATED FROM COMMUNISM". FOR THE MOST PART, HOWEVER, THE BOGOTA PRESS DESCRIBED THE GOLPE AS LAMENTABLE BUT INEVITABLE. EL TIEMPO (LIBERAL) IN ITS LEAD EDITORIAL COMMENTED ON THE SLIGHT CHANCES FOR SUCCESS THAT THE MARXIST EXPERIMENT HAD HAD IN A COUNTRY WITH AN ANTI-MARIST MAJORITY.

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THE EDITORIAL FURTHER ALLUDED TO ALLENDE'S MISHANDLING OF THE CHILEAN ECONOMY AND HIS "ARROGANT" APPROACH TO GOVERNMENT AS FACTORS LEADING TO THE INEVITABLE GOLPE. EL TIEMPO, IN COMMON WITH OTHER BOGOTA PAPERS EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE MILITARY RULE IN CHILE WOULD BE BRIEF. 'EL ESPECTADOR' (LIBERAL) EXPRESSED REGRET THAT CHILE, WITH HISTORY OF INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH AND HISTORY OF WELL MAINTAINED CIVIL LIBERTIES HAD UNDERGONE A MILITARY GOLPE. THE SAME EDITORIAL LAMENTED THE DEATH OF ALLENDE AS A PERSON WHO FOUGHT FOR HIS BELIEFS AND AS A "SYMBOL OF MUCH HOPE AND MANY ERRORS".

3. RADIO COVERAGE HAS ALSO BEEN EXTENSIVE, WITH SEVERAL STATIONS DEVOTING FULL COVERAGE TO THE EVENTS AND OTHERS INTERRUPTING REGULAR PROGRAMMING WITH FREQUENT BULLETINS DURING THE SEPTEMBER 11 HOURS OF THE CONFLICT. SOME OF THE RADIO REPORTS WERE NOTABLY MORE SENTIMENTAL IN NATURE THAN THE EVENTS SEEMED TO WARRANT. SENSATIONALISM IN BOGOTA RADIO REPORTING, HOWEVER, IS NOT AN INFREQUENT OCCURRENCE. IN THIS INSTANCE THE MAJOR DEPARTURE POINT WAS REPORTING ON THE NATURE OF PRESIDENT ALLENDE'S DEATH.

4. THE COLOMBIAN SENATE DEVOTED ITS SEPTEMBER 11 EVENING SESSION TO A DISCUSSION OF THE CHILEAN EVENTS. SOME OF THE MORE EXTREME LEFTIST SENATORS LASHED OUT AS EXPECTED AT THE CHILEAN MILITARY. ONE MODERATE LIBERAL, APOLINAR, DIAZ, DESCRIBED THE CHILEAN COUP AS AN EVENT AND EXAMPLE THAT COULD IMPERIL DEMOCRACY IN OTHER NATIONS. MOST OF THE SPEECHES WERE EXPRESSION OF REGRET THAT CHILE HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO DIVISIVENESS AND VIOLENCE. THE SESSION ENDED WITH A UNANIMOUS RESOLUTION REGRETTING THE BLOODSHED IN CHILE, LAMENTING THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT ALLENDE, AND NOTING THE GRAVE THREAT TO AMERICAN DEMOCRACY OF THESE VIOLENT EVENTS. THE SENATE RESOLUTION ENDED WITH AN EXPRESSION OF CONDOLENCE TO THE CHILEAN PEOPLE.

5. GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ, NOTED COLOMBIAN AUTHOR, IS AMONG THE FEW NOTABLE COLOMBIANS TO IMPLICATE THE U.S. IN THE CHILEAN GOLPE. IN A PUBLIC MESSAGE TO THE CHILEAN JUNTA GARCIA ACCUSED ITS MEMBERS OF BEING THE "MATERIAL AUTHORS" OF ALLENDE'S DEATH AND OF BEING IN THE HIRE OF NORTH AMERICAN IMPERIALISM.

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TO DATE, HOWEVER, THERE HAS NOT BEEN ANY SUBSTANTIAL SENTIMENT HERE LINKING THE U.S. TO THE GOLPE.

6. ANAPO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE MARIA EUGENIA ROJAS DE MORENO, EXPRESSED REGRET OVER THE CHILEAN EVENTS AND ATTRIBUTED ALLENDE'S DOWNFALL TO THE FACT THAT HE ADHERED TOO STRICTLY TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE.

7. EFFORTS OF EXTREMIST GROUPS TO MOUNT PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE NOT, AS OF THE AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 12, BEEN SUCCESSFUL. PROTEST MEETINGS HAVE BEEN CONFINED TO THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS AREAS. SECURITY FORCES HAVE SCATTERED THE FEW DEMONSTRATORS WHO HAVE VENTURED OUTSIDE SUCH AREAS. AT MIDDAY SEPTEMBER 12, ONE CAR WAS BURNED NEAR THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, PRESUMABLE AS A PART OF A DEMONSTRATION AGAINST CHILEAN EVENTS. ON THE WHOLE, HOWEVER, THE CITY IS GOING ABOUT BUSINESS AS USUAL.

8. ON BALANCE, COLOMBIAN ARE GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE EVENTS IN CHILE. WHILE THEY REGRET THE VIOLENCE, THE INSTALLATION OF MILITARY RULE AND THE EVENTS THAT CAUSED THE GOLPE, THEIR REGRET IS FOR EVENTS IN A SISTER REPUBLIC THAT, LAMENTABLE AS THEY MAY BE, DO NOT DIRECTLY OR IMMEDIATELY AFFECT COLOMBIA.
WHITE

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